

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- Sub. 25
1. A player tracking unit comprising:
a display;
one or more of illumination devices adjacent to said display;
one or more of the following player tracking interface devices: a card reader, a
key pad, a bonus button, a function button, a microphone, a sound projection device, a
10 camera, a wireless interface device, a proximity sensor and a finger print reader; and
a logic device designed or configured 1) to communicate with the display, the
one or more player tracking interface devices, a master gaming controller that controls
a game played on a gaming machine and a player tracking server and 2) to control
illumination of said illumination devices in a manner visually communicating gaming
15 information.
2. The player tracking unit of claim 1, further comprising:
a translucent cover over said illumination devices.
- 20 3. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein the translucent cover is one or
more colors.
4. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein said one or more illumination
devices are provided by light emitting diodes.
- 25 5. The player tracking unit of claim 4, wherein said one or more illumination
devices are multi-color light emitting diodes.
6. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein the one or more illumination
30 devices substantially surround the display.
7. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein the one or more illumination
devices surround a portion of a perimeter of the display.

8. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein there are multiple illumination devices and the logic device is designed or configured to independently illuminate each individual illumination device.

5 9. The player tracking unit of claim 8, wherein each of the illumination devices is illuminated in a time varying pattern to visually communicate the gaming information.

10 10. The player tracking unit of claim 1, further comprising a lamp controller designed or configured to provide voltage signals to said one or more of illumination devices.

11. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein one or more of the illumination devices is illuminated in response to a game event generated from at least one of a) the game played on the gaming machine, b) a game played on one or more gaming machines connected to the gaming machine, c) a remote gaming device.

12. The player tracking unit of claim 11, wherein the one or more player tracking interface devices comprises the sound projection device and wherein a sound is projected from the sound projection device in response to the game event.

13. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein one or more of the illumination devices is illuminated in response to a bonus game event generated from at least one of a) the game played on the gaming machine, b) a game played on one or more gaming machines connected to the gaming machine, c) a remote gaming device.

14. The player tracking unit of claim 13, wherein the one or more player tracking interface devices comprises the sound projection device and wherein a sound is projected from the sound projection device in response to the bonus game event.

15. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein the one or more player tracking interface devices comprises the proximity sensor and wherein the one or more of the illumination devices is illuminated in response to a signal generated from the proximity sensor.

16. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein one or more of the illumination devices is illuminated to indicate a status of a card inserted in the card reader.

5 17. The player tracking unit of claim 16, wherein the one or more player tracking interface devices comprises the sound projection device and wherein a sound is projected from the sound projection device to indicate a status of a card inserted in the card reader.

10 18. The player tracking unit of claim 17, wherein the sound is a voice message.

19. The player tracking unit of claim 17, wherein the card status is an invalid card, an abandoned card or an incorrectly inserted card.

15 20. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein one or more of the illumination devices is illuminated to indicate a special status of a player.

20 21. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein the one or more player tracking interface devices comprises the sound projection device and wherein a sound is projected from the sound projection to indicate a special status of a player.

25 22. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein one or more the illumination devices is illuminated to indicate at least one of 1) an amount of credits earned by the player during a game play session on the gaming machine or 2) a level earned by the player during a game play session on the gaming machine.

23. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein one or more of the illumination devices is illuminated to indicate a service request by the player.

30 24. The player tracking unit of claim 23, wherein the service request is a drink request.

25. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein one or more of the illumination devices is illuminated to indicate a status of a gaming device located on the gaming machine.
- 5 26 The player tracking unit of claim 25, wherein the gaming device is a hopper, a drop door or a printer.
27. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein one or more of the illumination devices is illuminate to indicate a status one or more of the player tracking interface
10 devices located on said player tracking unit.
28. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein one or more of the illumination is illuminated to indicate that a jackpot is pending.
- 15 29. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein one or more of the illumination devices is illuminated to indicate an error condition on the gaming machine.
30. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein the player tracking unit comprises gaming information that has been downloaded from the player tracking server or the
20 master gaming controller on the gaming machine.
31. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein the one or more player tracking interface devices comprises the sound projection device and wherein a sound is projected from the sound projection device in a manner to aurally communicate
25 gaming information to a game player.
32. The player tracking unit of claim 31, wherein the sound is a voice message.
33. The player tracking unit of claim 31, wherein the voice message is in a
30 language selected by a game player.
34. The player tracking unit of claim 33, wherein the language selected by the game player is determined from a user profile for the game player.

35. The player tracking unit of claim 33, wherein the language selected by the gaming player is stored as player tracking information on a player tracking card.

36. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein the one or more player tracking interface devices comprises the sound projection device and wherein a sound is projected from the sound projection device and one or more of the illumination devices is illuminated in some manner to simultaneously communicate gaming information visually and aurally.

37. The player tracking unit of claim 36, wherein a first gaming information is communicated aurally and a second gaming information different from said first gaming information is communicated visually.

38. The player tracking unit of claim 36, wherein a first illumination device is illuminated to indicate a first gaming information and a second illumination device is illuminated to indicate a second gaming information different from said first gaming information.

39. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein the one or more player tracking interface devices comprises the microphone and wherein the logic device is designed or configured to recognize and execute voice commands input using the microphone.

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41. The player tracking unit of claim 39, wherein the voice commands are used to request player tracking services.

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42. The player tracking unit of claim 39, further comprising:
a memory designed or configured to store voice recognition software executed by said logic device.

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43. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein the logic device is designed or configured to communicate with a portable wireless device.

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44. The player tracking unit of claim 42, wherein the player tracking unit sends player tracking information to the portable wireless device and receives player tracking information from the portable wireless device.

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5 45. The player tracking unit of claim 42, wherein the one or more player tracking interface devices comprises the wireless interface device and wherein the logic device communicates with the portable wireless device using the wireless interface device.

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10 46. The player tracking unit of claim 42, wherein the portable wireless device is worn by a game player.

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47. The player tracking unit of claim 42, wherein the portable wireless device is a personal digital assistant.

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15 48. The player tracking unit of claim 42, wherein the player tracking unit communicates with a portable wireless device using a wireless communication standard selected from the group consisting of Bluetooth, IEEE 802.11a, IEEE 802.11b, IEEE 802.11x, hipervlan/2, and HomeRF.

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20 49. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein a sound is projected from the sound projection device in response to a signal generated from the proximity sensor.

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50. The player tracking unit of claim 48, wherein the sound is a voice message designed to attract the attention of a game player.

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25 51. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein one or more of the illumination devices is illuminated in response to an error condition generated by the player tracking unit.

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30 52. The player tracking unit of claim 1, further comprising:
at least one of a software firewall and a hardware firewall.

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53. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein the illumination devices are electroluminescent lighting devices.

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54. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein the camera, the microphone and the finger print reader are used as biometric input devices.

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5 55. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein the logic device is designed or configured to communicate with the one or more player tracking interface devices using at least one of a USB communication standard, an IEEE 1394 communication standard or a Firewire communication standard.

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10 56. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein one or more of the illumination devices is illuminated in response to a game event generated from a game played on a second gaming machine.

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15 57. The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein one or more the illumination devices is illuminated to indicate at least one of 1) a range of credits earned by the player during a game play session on the gaming machine or 2) a level earned by the player during a game play session on the gaming machine.

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20 58. A gaming machine comprising:
a master gaming controller designed or configured to control one or more games played on the gaming machine; and
a player tracking unit, said player tracking unit comprising:
a display;
one or more of illumination devices adjacent to said display;
25 one or more of the following player tracking interface devices: a card reader, a key pad, a bonus button, a function button, a microphone, a sound projection device, a camera, a wireless interface device, a proximity sensor and a finger print reader; and
a logic device designed or configured 1) to communicate with the
30 display, the one or more player tracking interface devices, the master gaming controller and a player tracking server and 2) to control illumination of said illumination devices in a manner visually communicating gaming information.

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59. The gaming machine of claim ⁵⁷58, wherein the master gaming controller is designed or configured to operate one or more of the player tracking interface devices, the display and the one or more of illumination devices.

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~~60.~~ The gaming machine of claim ⁵⁷~~58~~, wherein the one or more games is selected from the group consisting of video slot games, mechanical slot games, video black jack games, video poker games, video keno games, video pachinko games, video card games, video games of chance and combinations thereof.

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~~61.~~ The gaming machine of claim ⁵⁷~~58~~, wherein there are multiple illumination devices and wherein at least one of the master gaming controller and the logic device is designed or configured to independently illuminate each individual illumination device.

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~~62.~~ The gaming machine of claim ⁶⁰~~61~~, wherein each of the illumination devices is illuminated in a time varying pattern to visually communicate the gaming information.

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~~63.~~ The gaming machine of claim ⁵⁷~~58~~, wherein one or more of the illumination devices is illuminated in response to a game event generated from at least one of a) the game played on the gaming machine, b) a game played on one or more gaming machines connected to the gaming machine, c) a remote gaming device.

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~~64.~~ The gaming machine of claim ⁶²~~63~~, wherein the one or more player tracking interface devices comprises the sound projection device and wherein a sound is projected from the sound projection device in response to the game event.

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~~65.~~ The gaming machine of claim ⁵⁷~~58~~, wherein one or more of the illumination devices is illuminated in response to a bonus game event generated from at least one of a) the game played on the gaming machine, b) a game played on one or more gaming machines connected to the gaming machine, c) a remote gaming device.

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~~66.~~ The gaming machine of claim ⁶⁴~~65~~, wherein the one or more player tracking interface devices comprises the sound projection device and wherein a sound is projected from the sound projection device in response to the bonus game event.

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5 ~~67.~~ The gaming machine of claim ⁵⁷~~58~~, wherein one or more of the illumination devices is illuminated to indicate an error condition on the gaming machine.

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10 ~~68.~~ The gaming machine of claim ⁵⁷~~58~~, wherein the one or more player tracking interface devices comprises the microphone and wherein at least one of the logic device and the master gaming controller is designed or configured to recognize and execute voice commands input using the microphone.

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15 ~~69.~~ The gaming machine of claim ⁶⁷~~68~~, wherein the voice commands are used to request at least one of player tracking services and gaming services.

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20 ~~70.~~ The gaming machine of claim 1, wherein at least one of the logic device and the master gaming controller is designed or configured to communicate with a portable wireless device.

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25 ~~71.~~ The gaming machine of claim ⁶⁹~~70~~, wherein the player tracking unit sends player tracking information to the portable wireless device and receives player tracking information from the portable wireless device.

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30 ~~72.~~ The gaming machine of claim ⁶⁹~~70~~, wherein the one or more player tracking interface devices comprises the wireless interface device and wherein at least one of the logic device and the master gaming controller communicates with the portable wireless device using the wireless interface device.

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35 ~~73.~~ The gaming machine of claim ⁶⁹~~70~~, wherein the portable wireless device is worn by a game player.

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40 ~~74.~~ The gaming machine of claim ⁶⁹~~70~~, wherein the portable wireless device is a personal digital assistant.

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75. The gaming machine of claim 70⁶⁹, wherein at least one of the logic device and the master gaming controller communicate with a portable wireless device using a wireless communication standard selected from the group consisting of Bluetooth, IEEE 802.11a, IEEE802.11b, IEEE80211x, hiperlan/2, and HomeRF

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76. The gaming machine of claim 70⁶⁹, further comprising:
an antenna for transmitting and receiving wireless communications.

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77. The gaming machine of claim 58⁵⁷, wherein the master gaming controller and
10 the logic device communicate using a wireless communication protocol selected from the group consisting of Bluetooth, IEEE 802.11a, IEEE 802.11b, IEEE 802.11x, hiperlan/2, and HomeRF.

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78. The gaming machine of claim 58⁵⁷, wherein the master gaming controller and
15 the logic device communicate using a communication protocol selected from the group consisting of USB, IEE1394 and Firewire.

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79. The gaming machine of claim 58⁵⁷, wherein one or more of the illumination devices is illuminated in response to a game event generated from a game played on a
20 second gaming machine.

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80. The gaming machine of claim 58⁵⁷, wherein one or more the illumination devices is illuminated to indicate at least one of 1) a range of credits earned by the player during a game play session on the gaming machine or 2) a level earned by the
25 player during a game play session on the gaming machine.

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(81. A player tracking system comprising:
a player tracking server;
a plurality of gaming machines, said gaming machines each comprising:
30 a master gaming controller designed or configured to control one or more games played on the gaming machine; and
a player tracking unit, said player tracking unit comprising:
a display;
one or more illumination devices adjacent to said display;

one or more of the following player tracking interface devices:
a card reader, a key pad, a bonus button, a function button, a
microphone, a sound projection device, a camera, a wireless interface
device, a proximity sensor and a finger print reader; and

5 a logic device designed or configured 1) to communicate with
the display, the one or more player tracking interface devices, the
master gaming controller and a player tracking server and 2) to control
illumination of said illumination devices in a manner visually
communicating gaming information; and

10 a network designed or configured to allow communication between the
plurality of gaming machines and the player tracking server.

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/82. A method of providing player tracking services in a player tracking unit in a
gaming machine, said method comprising:

15 receiving an input signal relating to a game event in the player tracking unit;
determining a visual response to the game event; and
illuminating one or more illumination devices located adjacent to a display in
the player tracking unit to convey a visual response to the game event.

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20 83. The method of claim 82, further comprising:
determining an aural response to the game event; and
projecting sound from a sound projection device in the player tracking unit to
convey an aural response to the game event.

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25 84. The method of claim 83, wherein the aural response is a voice message.

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30 85. The method of claim 83, further comprising:
determining a duration of an aural response and
after the duration of the aural response has expired, terminating the aural
response to the game event.

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86. The method of claim 83, further comprising:
receiving a second input signal relating to the game event and terminating the
aural response to the game event.

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~~87.~~ The method of claim ~~83~~, wherein the input signal is received at least one of a master gaming controller on the gaming machine; a player tracking device on the player tracking unit and a player tracking server.

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~~88.~~ The method of claim ~~83~~, further comprising:
 receiving a second input signal relating to the game event and terminating the
 visual response to the game event.

10 ~~89~~⁸⁸ The method of claim ~~83~~⁸², further comprising:
determining a duration of the visual response and
after the duration of the visual response has expired, terminating the visual
response to the game event.

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15 ~~90.~~ The player tracking unit of claim 1, wherein one or more of the illumination
devices is illuminated to indicate a special promotion is being offered.